

Bognor Regis REGENERATION



Development Report

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Project **Bognor Regis Regeneration
Development Report**

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How do we propose a sustainable regeneration for Bognor Regis?

- Provide for the local community, support local businesses, retail and leisure opportunities
- A landmark regeneration project to bring Bognor Regis back as a serious tourist destination on the South Coast
- Catalyse the regeneration through the 'Centre for Imagination'; a proposal for a multi use cultural centre both inspired by and to celebrate William Blake

INTRODUCTION

Background

Arun Council are voting this Wednesday on the subject of developing proposals for the Regis Centre site and environs.

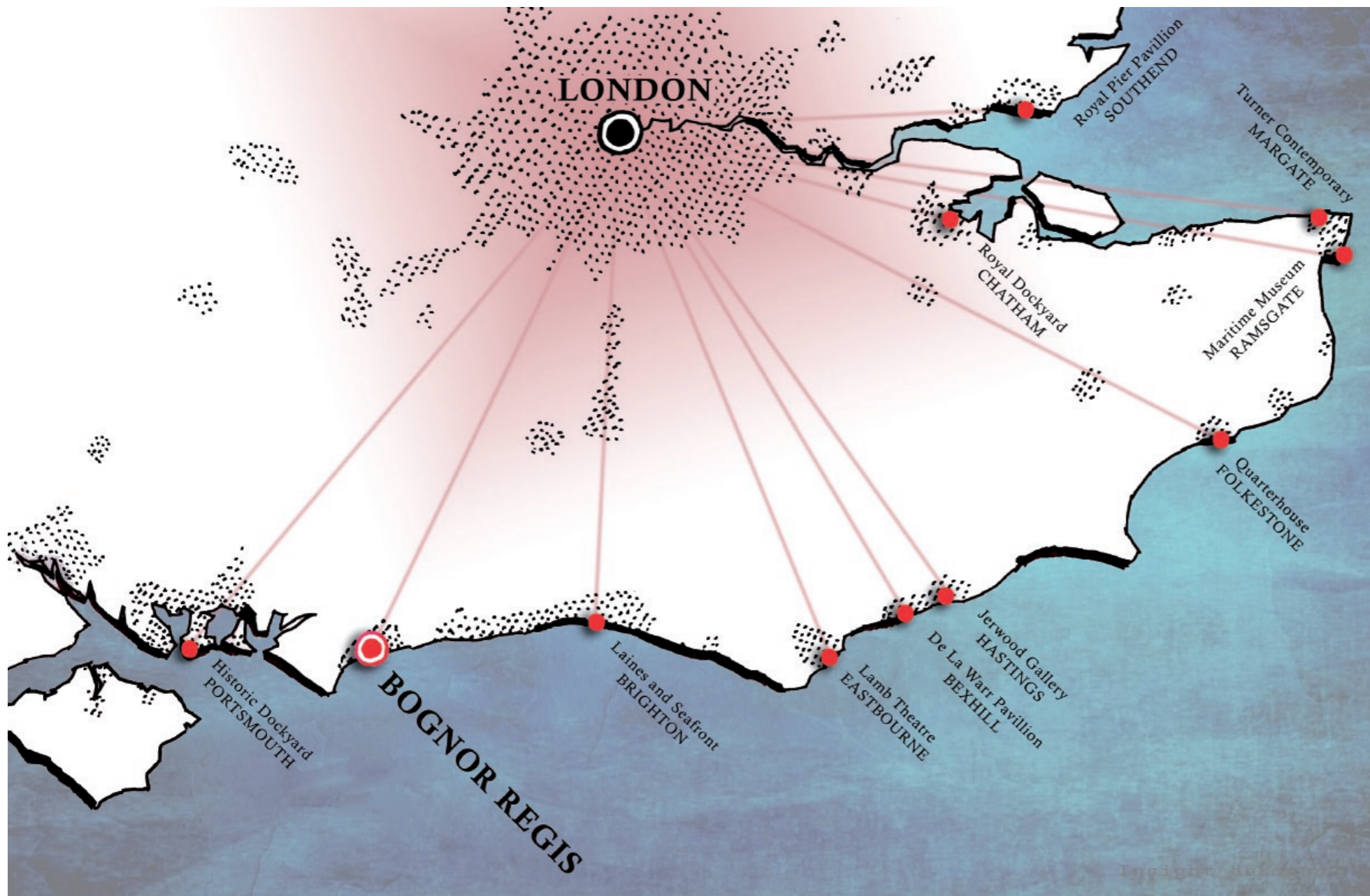
This report intends to elaborate upon the current elapsed scheme and propose a further layer of development specifically to help Bognor Regis in securing a sustainable future with a unique and local agenda.

The Big Blake Project have reflected upon the existing proposals in an attempt to further develop and imbue a masterplan of the Regis Centre site that can become a catalyst to the regeneration of the seafront, Bognor Regis, the local area, and help place Bognor Regis on the national cultural map.

Bognor Regis is fantastically placed to expand its tourism economy

In order for a proposal to support the continual regeneration of Bognor, it needs to be underpinned with a sustainable economic model. The town has always been synonymous with tourism, but now it can build upon its reputation as a typical British seaside town by following a new strategy based upon cultural tourism.

Various capital and lottery funded regeneration projects, such as Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings and the Turner Contemporary in Margate, align to the South Coast, all conveniently placed within a days rail trip from Central London. Bognor Regis is equidistant from these towns containing the developments. Why can't it have the same?





Bognor Regis and Felpham lay claim to an association with an iconic English artistic and literary figure

Bognor has the ability to enter the cultural day trip tourist market by celebrating and promoting William Blake, a once resident of adjacent Felpham.

Rather than a retrospective exhibition space for William Blake, his paintings, thoughts, poetry, legacy etc. Might not the 'father of imagination' be the seed for a centre that not just celebrates his work, but uses it to inspire a contemporary centre for imagination and creativity, that forms a central burst of regeneration to the Regis Centre site that can ripple throughout the town.

How can the historic link with William Blake regenerate the entire town and area?

The Big Blake Project have created and published a Blake Trail, a meandering walk connecting key areas and associated places to William Blake in Bognor Regis. Highlights of this trail include the Railway Station as a starting point, the seafront promenade and Blake's Cottage in Felpham Village.

This trail includes various opportunities for further regeneration. What if these areas could be strategically linked through the Blake Trail and formed a basis for a masterplan linking up Bognor's existing treasures and new potential regenerative sites?



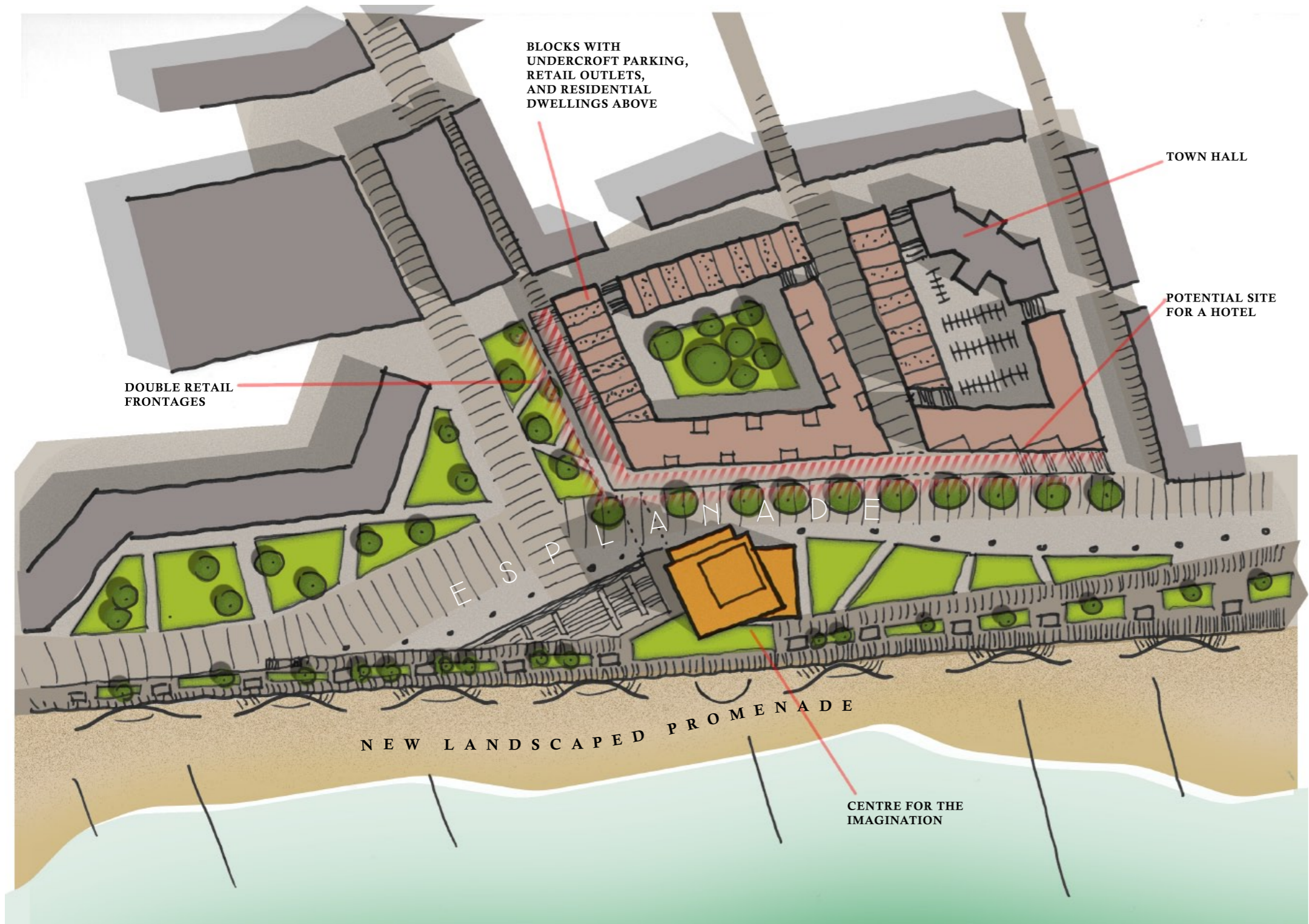
Potential Regeneration sites:

- Hothampton
- Bognor Regis Pier
- Seafront Promenade
- Esplanade/ Butlins corner

Existing 'Treasures'

- Felpham Seafront
- St. Mary's Church
- Hotham Park
- Waterloo Square/ Regency Waterfront

Regis Centre Site; a suggested proposal to meet the requirements for regeneration with both the local community and tourist market in mind.



The existing proposals for the Regis Centre Site propose a mixed use retail and leisure hub for the local community. This could be built upon with an addition of the William Blake inspired 'Centre for the Imagination', containing a new theatre/ performance space and freeing up more space for development.

This could also provide a residential element to this scheme which could further enhance the quality of the development into a mixed use culture, retail, leisure and residential development that responds and enhances with the existing rich regency architecture and planning prominent along the esplanade.

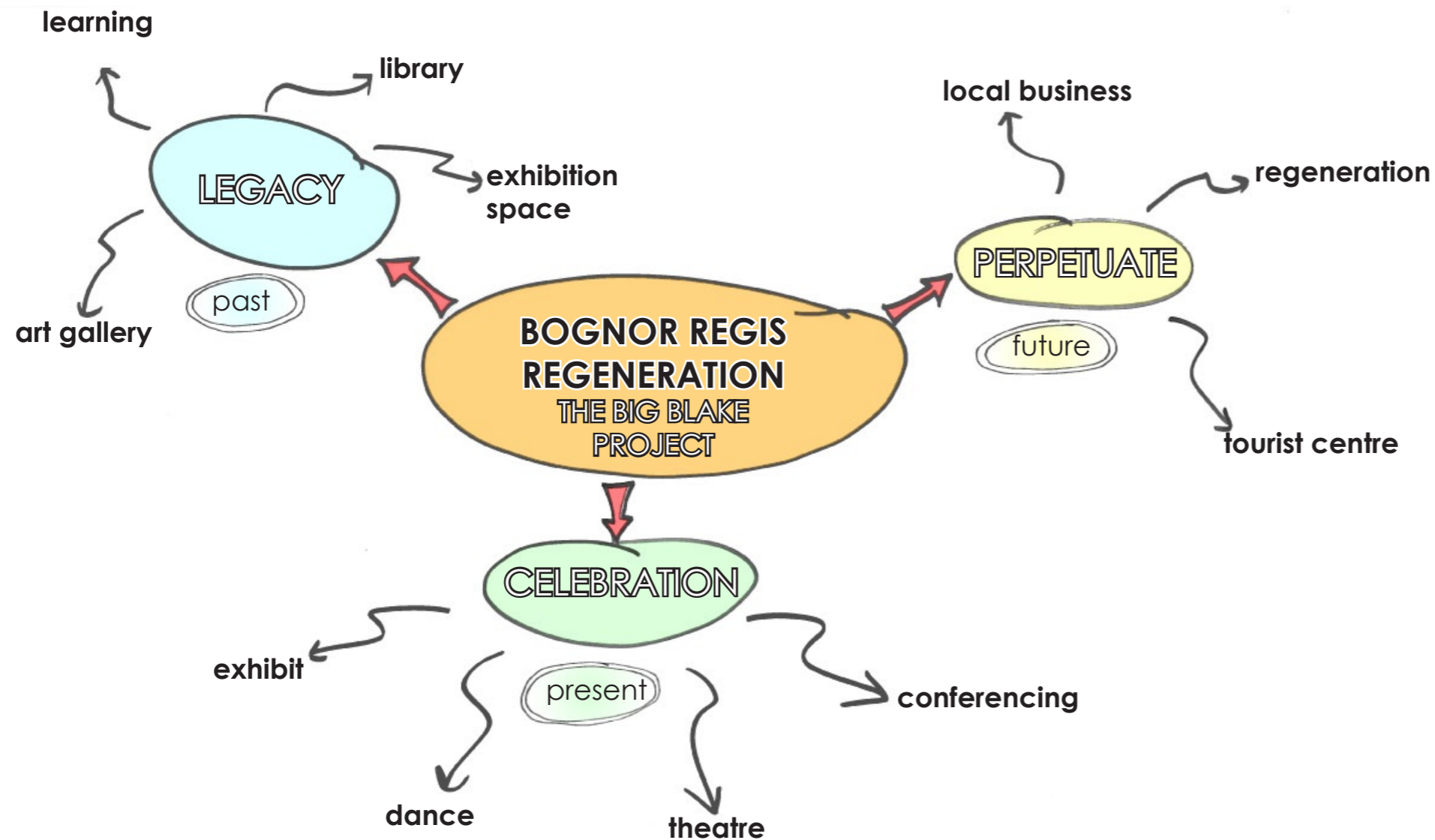


Centre for the Imagination!

A cultural hub for Bognor Regis inspired by the art, poetry and philosophy of William Blake.

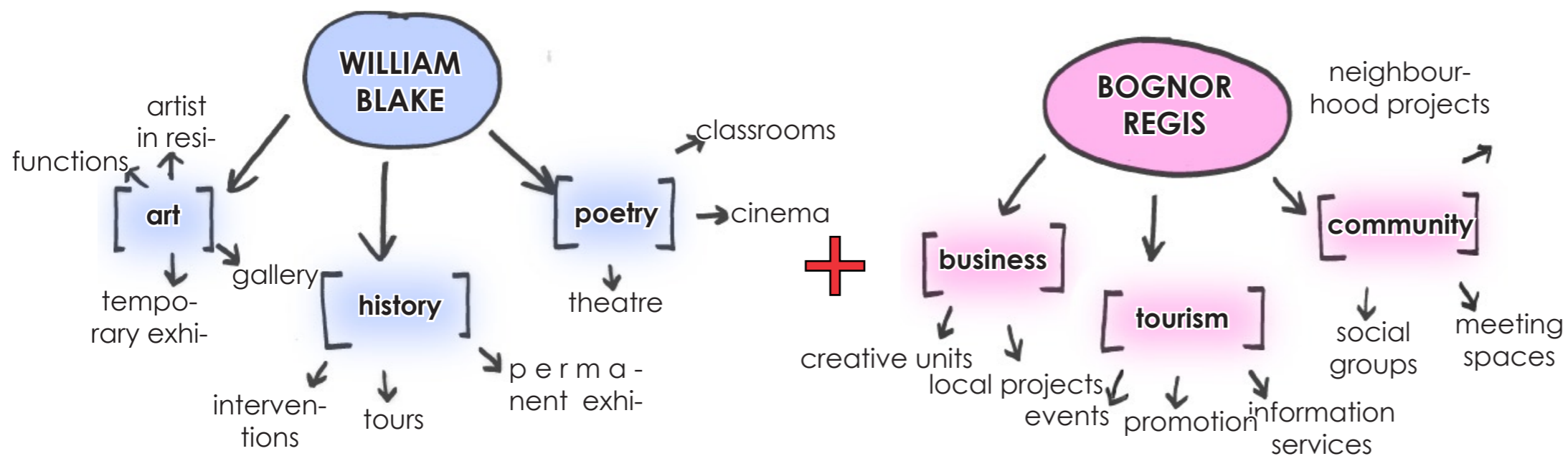
What could this hub contain?

- A new and unique Theatre/Performance/Exhibition space
- Permanent Exhibition Space dedicated to William Blake
- Workshops and Classrooms for schoolchildren or visitors to promote interactive and creative activities
- Associated retail and catering facilities, with a restaurant overlooking the town and seafront with views across the English Channel and coast.



Who is this for?

- The Local Community; individuals; schools; further education; local businesses; external businesses for conferencing.
- The tourists; locals visiting for an afternoon, sojourn from shopping; the day tripper from London; the people on holiday either in Bognor or surrounding holiday facilities.



This centre could be a draw to re-imagine Bognor Regis Seafront, not limited to the tourist, but the local community also. The outlined brief attempts to cater for all peoples and not just narrowly focus on one particular group.



Jerwood Gallery, Hastings
Cultural Precedent

Conclusions

The idea of a flagship cultural centre to spearhead regeneration is an established strategy, prevalent in many UK and European urban areas.

The day trip tourist from London has many options on the South Coast, but a centre in Bognor Regis, focussed on a huge figure to English culture and identity could bring a new uniqueness to Bognor Regis and the area, as well as an inspiration to the local residents and businesses to have a new and rich association to thier town.



Folkestone Quarterhouse
Cultural Precedent

The surrounding Regis Centre site could build upon the existing proposals, and with the new Blake 'Centre for the Imagination' combine with the esplanade and surrounding town developments to once again make Bognor Regis a wonderful place to live, vist and stay.



Cromwell Square, London
Mixed use precedent